



Inclusive

Leadership

PlayBook

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# Inclusive Leadership PlayBook

What challenges are your organization wrestling with? Revenue growth? Product and service innovation? Profitability? Change management? Agility? Complexity?

No matter what issues you're dealing with, you have the internal resources to address them. You just might not be taking advantage of them.

## The Benefits of Diversity of Thought:

1.

GUARD AGAINST GROUPTHINK  
AND EXPERT OVERCONFIDENCE

2.

INCREASE THE SCALE OF NEW INSIGHTS

3.

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT EMPLOYEES WHO  
CAN BEST TACKLE THEIR MOST  
PRESSING PROBLEMS

## Diversity of Thought: A Pathway to Inclusive Leadership

A huge percentage of the investment your organization makes is in its people—in essence, your business runs on their thinking. The goal of every leader ought to be making sure the organization is getting a full return on that diversity of thinking.

While “diversity of thought” hasn’t traditionally been a big focus of the diversity and inclusion movement, it’s increasingly gaining attention with business leaders, particularly as a number of recent studies have highlighted its benefits and business value. More and more high-profile leaders are talking about their commitment to bringing in a variety of perspectives and ideas because they see diversity of thought as essential for driving results, especially in terms of its contributions to innovation and problem solving.

Leaders that explore this new frontier of diversity [of thought] can blend the cacophony of ideas in their workplace to spark innovation and creativity. Even the slightest nuance of one worker’s thinking, if appropriately harnessed, could bring value to the organization.

Deloitte University Press’s article, “Diversity’s New Frontier”


<http://dupress.com/articles/diversitys-new-frontier/>

But where to begin? How can you, as a leader, measure and then leverage and apply that diversity of thought—to go beyond just having diversity to actually realizing its benefits?

Because to be clear, your organization already has it. Our research shows that diversity of thought exists within every organization and, indeed, within every person. To compete and survive in an ever-evolving marketplace, however, you need to create the conditions for new insights to emerge, for diverse perspectives to be heard and for good ideas to become great. That’s what inclusive leadership is all about.

While the Deloitte report references the latest advances in neurological research, thankfully, this doesn’t have to be so complicated that you need to spend time deciphering the nuances of new developments in neuroscience. Smart leaders rely on a few practical models, tools and methods that are specifically designed with business results in mind.

# Making Headway with Diversity of Thought

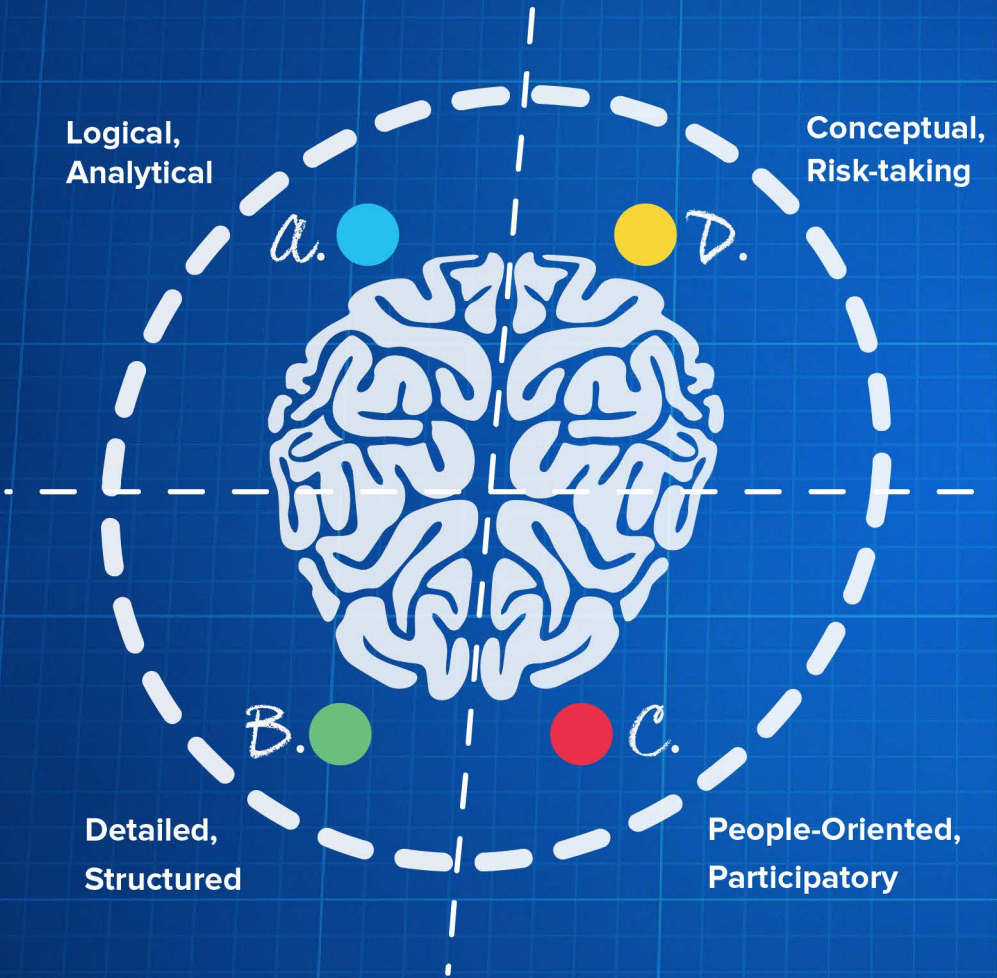


Our research on the brain and the application in business situations has consistently shown that people, teams and entire organizations will get better results when they recognize, seek out and apply the full diversity of thought available to them. This applies to revenue growth, cost containment, problem solving, creativity, change management, product development, and every critical issue businesses face today.

This is something we've been studying for more than three decades. What we've discovered is that different tasks and problems require different mental processes, and the way people prefer to think influences how they process information, tackle projects, interact with others and view opportunities. In other words, how you prefer to think affects how you behave. Each of these different thinking preferences brings unique value.

The challenge, however, is that thinking preferences also affect what we pay attention to—and what we overlook. This is why, no matter how well intended you are, it can be easy to miss or discount the perspectives that are radically different from your own. It's almost like a default response. Unless you're intentional about removing your own thinking blind spots and valuing diversity of thought as a smart business practice, that default response is likely to win out.

# The Whole Brain Model



***The Whole Brain® Model***, which serves as an organizing principle for how the brain works, depicts the four different thinking preferences:

- ***A – Logical, Analytical,***
- ***B – Detailed, Structured,***
- ***C – People-Oriented, Participatory,***
- ***D – Conceptual, Risk-taking.***

***Although an individual may prefer certain modes of thinking over others, everyone has access to all four quadrants.***

Using the skill of Whole Brain® Thinking, people and teams are able to fully leverage their preferences, stretch to other styles when necessary, and adapt to and take advantage of the full diversity of thought within themselves and in those around them to be more responsive, collaborative, innovative productive.

### ***Getting Intentional:***

#### ***Turning Diversity of Thought into Business Value***

You have the diversity of thought in your organization. Here's what you can do to start getting more value from it immediately.



# #1

## Harness Your Own Diversity of Thought to Be the Agile Leader Today's World Demands:



With so much pressure, information overload and juggling of priorities today, it's easy for leaders to default to their thinking "comfort zones," even that approach may not be best suited for the situation.



Leaders often surround themselves with people who have complementary thinking preferences to "fill in the gaps" of their own preferences. However, today's leaders also have to be agile thinkers to be effective, able to access all four quadrants—the diversity of thought within themselves—and adept at shifting their point of focus to more fully engage their team and colleagues as well as their current and prospective customers.

Modeling the skills of an agile leader will enhance all aspects of inclusion, helping you improve and streamline communication, build greater flexibility to adapt to a changing world and tackle complex challenges head on.

Smart Leadership Practices: Rich DeSerio, former manager of IBM's award-winning Leadership Development Programs' Global Design Team, says IBM integrated Whole Brain® Thinking into its leadership competencies to build thinking agility because it views diversity of all kinds as a competitive advantage in today's world and essential to innovative thinking: "We strongly believe and emphasize: the more perspectives and viewpoints you can get, the better."

## #2 Create, Manage & Empower High-Performing Teams:



With the ability to profile employees' thinking preferences (using a validated instrument like the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® [HBDI®] assessment), you can assemble teams that can perform at quantum levels higher than the norm. This has been proven through our work with thousands of organizations around the globe facing critical business challenges.



A six-year study at the U.S. Forest Service added valuable insights: Teams that are balanced in terms of thinking preferences are more effective; they consider more options and make better decisions. The study also found that when faced with a complex challenge, “whole-brained” teams were 66% more efficient than homogeneous teams. We continue to spearhead research in this area, most recently in a study we conducted in partnership with INSEAD on the impact thinking preferences and diversity of thought have on management team performance.



*“Whole-Brained” Teams Were*

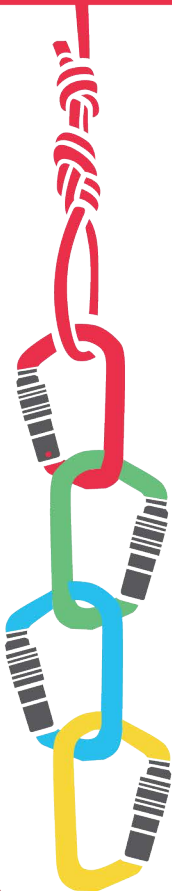
**66%**

*More Efficient Than*

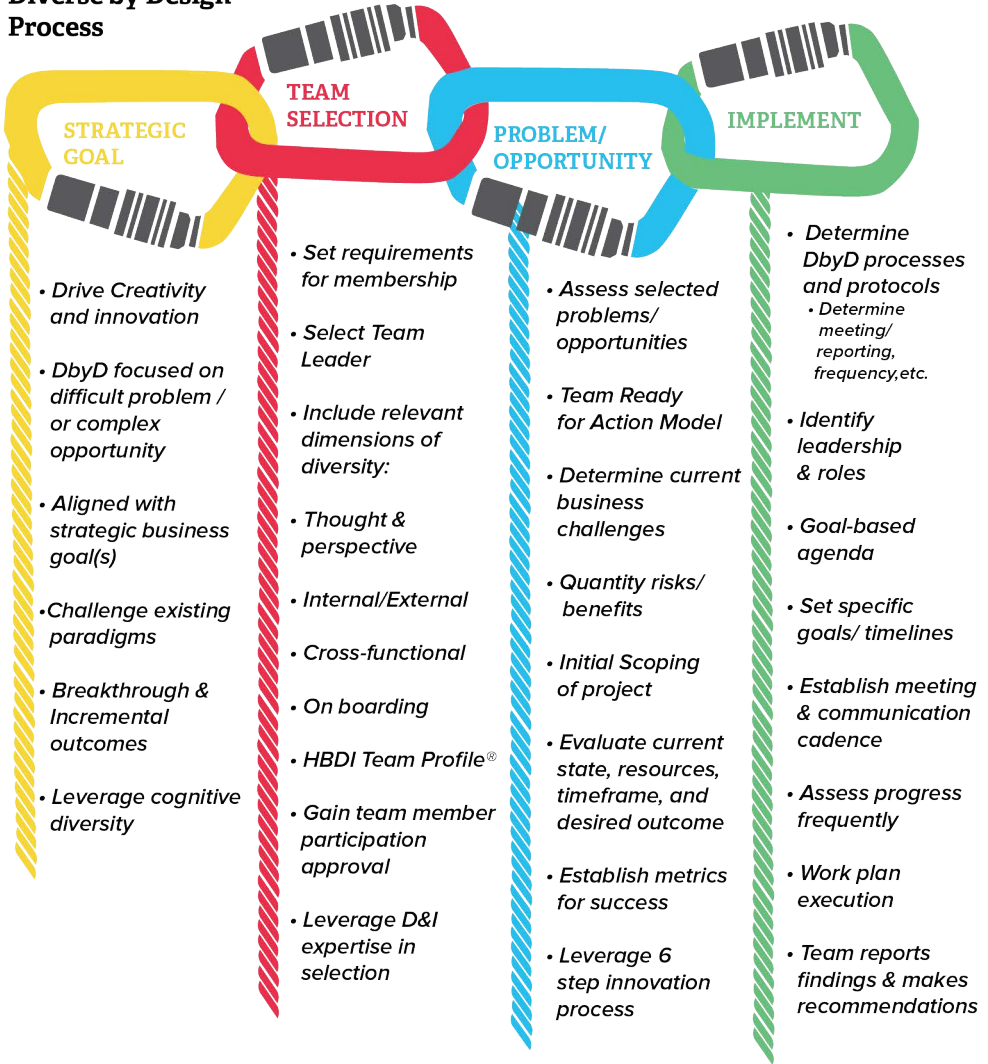
*Homogeneous Teams*

## *Smart Leadership Practices:*

While at Caesars Entertainment, Fred Keeton formed “Diverse by Design (DbyD)” teams based on employees’ thinking preferences and predispositions, along with other relevant dimensions of diversity, and assigned them to specific projects to drive enhanced outcomes. It’s a process he describes as “yield-managing” diversity of thought. One of their primary objectives was “focusing on breakthrough outcomes.” Results included innovative ways to achieve new or increased revenue, cost savings, process efficiencies and improved engagement.



# An Example "Diverse by Design" Process



**“Diversity of thought allows us to configure teams that generate superior economic value by generating better solutions to real business problems.”**

## OUTCOMES

- New or increased Revenue Generation
- Cost Savings
- Innovation
- Process Efficiencies
- Engagment Opportunities
- Positive Branding
- D&I ROI

# #3

## Lead with Inclusion in Mind to Increase Productivity

Particularly as the complexity of projects and problems grows, diversity of thought is essential. We need those different perspectives, ideas and approaches working together to get the best results. But inclusive leadership is about more than just bringing together diverse thinkers.

It requires recognizing and valuing diversity of thought and making sure that others do, too. Cognitively diverse teams that aren't managed properly with effective leadership and tools can quickly become hamstrung by silo mentalities, conflict, frustration, communication impasses and, ultimately, missed opportunities.



Leaders set the stage by providing the cultural foundation and necessary development to help teams understand the value of the difference so they get a wider range of input, feedback and suggestions.

The right tools and common “language” are also critical for ensuring everyone is being heard and contributing to the process. The more diverse the team is, the more important it is to have a skilled leader in place.

**Smart Leadership Practices:**

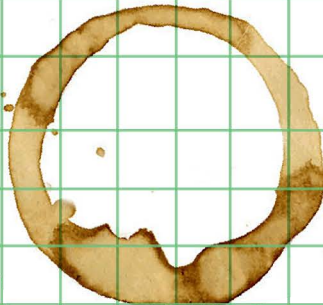
The leaders overseeing the construction of the \$700 million Parkland Project healthcare facility in Texas faced a multitude of potentially productivity-killing challenges. With diverse stakeholders including specialists in construction management, contracting, design, patient advocacy, technology and environmental concerns, the project team could easily have been thrown off track by conflicting agendas, processes and approaches. But an intentional approach of Whole Brain® Leadership contributed to unprecedented levels of trust, collaboration and problem solving. As a result the project was completed two weeks ahead of schedule and \$5-6 million under budget. Not only that, its power plant has since been named one of the best-designed plants in the U.S. by the American Council of Engineering Companies.

**4** kinds of behavior account for 89% of leadership effectiveness

- Be supportive
- Seek different perspectives
- Operate with strong results orientation
- Solve problems effectively

*“Leaders will see significant improvement in their ability to lead others when they invest the time and energy in understanding and speaking the ‘language’ of those they lead.”*

*– Ned Herrmann and Ann Herrmann-Nehdi,  
The Whole Brain Business Book,  
Second Edition*



# #4 Ignite Innovation by Expanding Your View:

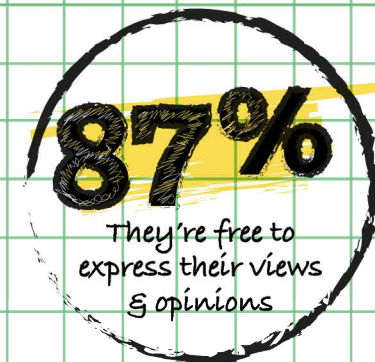
Successful leaders today are those who encourage everyone—including themselves—to bring their best thinking to work. Research by Edward Lumsdaine and Martin Binks (*Entrepreneurship from Creativity to Innovation: Effective Thinking Skills for a Changing World*) and others shows that the best solutions and most innovative ideas come from the combination of all four thinking preferences. It's up to the leaders to set the stage for this diversity of thought to be leveraged and channeled toward business outcomes. Again, having that diversity is only the first step; Inclusive leaders know what to do with it.





# Employees

whose leaders demonstrate inclusive behaviors report



Source: Center for Talent Innovation

## Smart Leadership Practices:

Shannon Loftis, who led Microsoft Game Studios' Good Science Studio team in designing the "Kinect Adventures" games for the Kinect for Xbox 360, used the Whole Brain® framework to help her diverse team of project managers and creative developers come up with a wider variety of ideas and more balanced solutions. With the goal of developing a set of games that appealed to more than just the typical gamer audience, this was already a challenging project, but the team faced the added pressure of an accelerated timeframe in which to get it done. Loftis's team not only dramatically reduced overall development time—by 40% compared to typical game design projects—it created an innovative set of games that is enjoyed by a broad consumer audience and has been praised as capturing the depth and breadth of what the Kinect peripheral can do.

# #5 Attract, Engage and Retain Talent for a Sustainable Competitive Advantage:

As the balance of power in the job market shifts, talented employees have more options, and increasingly, they're looking for those "dream job" opportunities that allow them to tap into their unique strengths. The irony is, that dream job could be right where they are, yet many leaders are inadvertently pushing them out the door by failing to recognize the hidden talent treasures in their organization. Inclusive leaders use tools like the HBDI® to address mental mismatches, help better align people with the work and prepare them to stretch. These leaders don't just seek out untapped talent; they know how to engage it. They've developed the agility to adapt their own thinking to meet the needs of the employee, the team and the business.



**Smart Leadership Practices:**

The Parkland Project team says it was able to attract the best crews from the best subcontractors in the area, and maintain excellent employee retention and best-in-class employee engagement rates, because of the way Whole Brain® Thinking influenced its leadership and communication approaches. The best of the best are eager to be part of and contribute their effort to these kinds of projects and organizations, and the results speak for themselves. As the project’s Senior Vice President of Facilities Planning and Development noted,

***“This is one of the most successful public projects in the history of the United States.”***

Leaders and managers play a pivotal role in making sure the organization gets the value of differences rather than ending up with conflict, which can frequently happen. Diverse teams without the benefit of proper management tools like the HBDI® and well-developed skills to manage its application can quickly devolve into chaos. The more diverse a team, function or division is, the more important it is to have a skilled, inclusive leader who can manage, facilitate and incorporate Whole Brain® Thinking practices within the team and organization, while at the same time driving strategy toward specific business goals.

**Diversity is Two-Dimensional: Inherent & Acquired.**

Employees whose leaders demonstrate inclusive behaviors report:



Source: Center for Talent Innovation

In today's complex environment, inclusive leaders who seek out, value, encourage and apply diverse perspectives and approaches will set your organization apart from all the rest. The diversity of thought is already there. Make sure you have the inclusive leadership practices in place to be able to get a full return on that investment.



Herrmann

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# DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT



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